

March 10, 2022

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Mary LaPorte and I am from Hartford.

I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

For the past three years, I have volunteered to accompany individuals to deportation hearings at the Federal Courthouse in Hartford as part of the Hartford Deportation Defense Fund. During that time, I have been deeply concerned about the many children I have encountered. Most of these children were with parents who were asked by the court to bring their children with them or who were unable to bring their **younger brothers and sisters** while simultaneously trying to translate for a parent.

I was grateful when the CT Legislature agreed to provide healthcare to children in the immigrant community up until the age of 8. But that is not enough. The children in the age group of 9 to 17 often carry responsibilities that are hard to imagine. If they become ill, either physically or mentally, the entire family may end up in a crisis situation. This has been even more obvious during the recent lockdowns due to **Covid**.

CT now has the opportunity to move even closer to guaranteeing health care to everyone in need. Please join me in support of S.B. 284. I also ask that the Committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,
Mary H. LaPorte